Marion County
Board of County Commissioners

Growth Services

2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd.
Ocala, FL 34470
Phone: 352-438-2600
Fax: 352-438-2601

PLANNING & ZONING SECTION
STAFF REPORT

	P&ZC Date: 02/23/2026	**BCC Date: ~~03/17/2026~~ (move to April, date TBD)**
Case Number:	260203SU	
CDP-AR:	000054-2026	
Type of Case:	**Special Use Permit:** Requesting permission to install one 154-foot-tall AGL monopole style telecommunication tower and support facility in a General Agriculture (A-1) zone.	
Owner	Ronald & Shirley Adams	
Applicant	Mattaniah S. Jahn, Esq.	
Street Address	4390 E HWY 316, Citra, FL 32113	
Parcel Number	0800-300-000	
Property Size	±13.15 acres	
Future Land Use	Rural Land (RL)	
Zoning Classification	General Ag (A-1)	
Overlay Zone/Scenic Area	Secondary Springs Protection Zone	
Staff Recommendation	**Approval with Conditions**	
P&ZC Recommendation	**TBD**	
Project Planner	Xinyi Cindy Chen	
Related Case(s)	N/A	

I. ITEM SUMMARY

Mattaniah S. Jahn, Esq., on behalf of the property owners, Ronald and Shirley Adams, and the lessee, Vertical Bridge (VB BTS II, LLC), has filed an application for a Special Use Permit to request permission to install one 154'-high monopole telecommunication tower and support facility in a General Agriculture (A-1) zone. (see Attachment A). Figure 1 is an aerial photograph showing the general location of the subject property. The Parcel Identification Number associated with the property is 0800-300-000, and the street address is 4390 E HWY 316, Citra, FL 32113. The legal description is displayed in the survey included in the application (See Attachment A). The subject property is ±13.15 acres. The parcel is located inside of the Secondary Springs Protection Zone. The applicant is applying for a Special Use Permit (SUP) because T-Mobile needs to collocate a monopole style telecommunication tower in order to solve the gap in service in the area. Staff recommend approval because the requested use is compatible with the surrounding area, will not adversely affect the public interest, and is consistent with the Marion County Comprehensive Plan.

Figure 1
Aerial Photograph of Subject Property

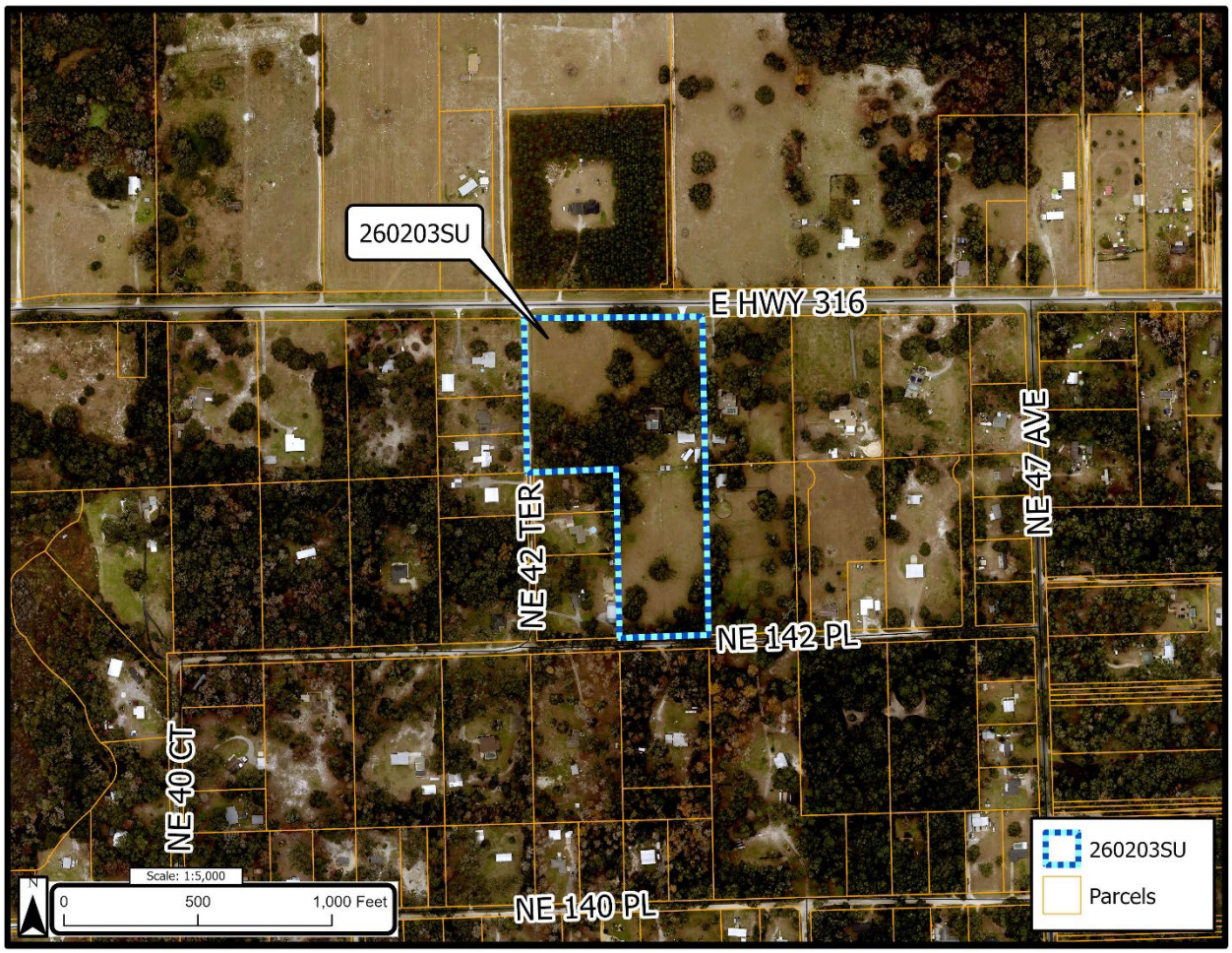


Figure 2
Conceptual Plan

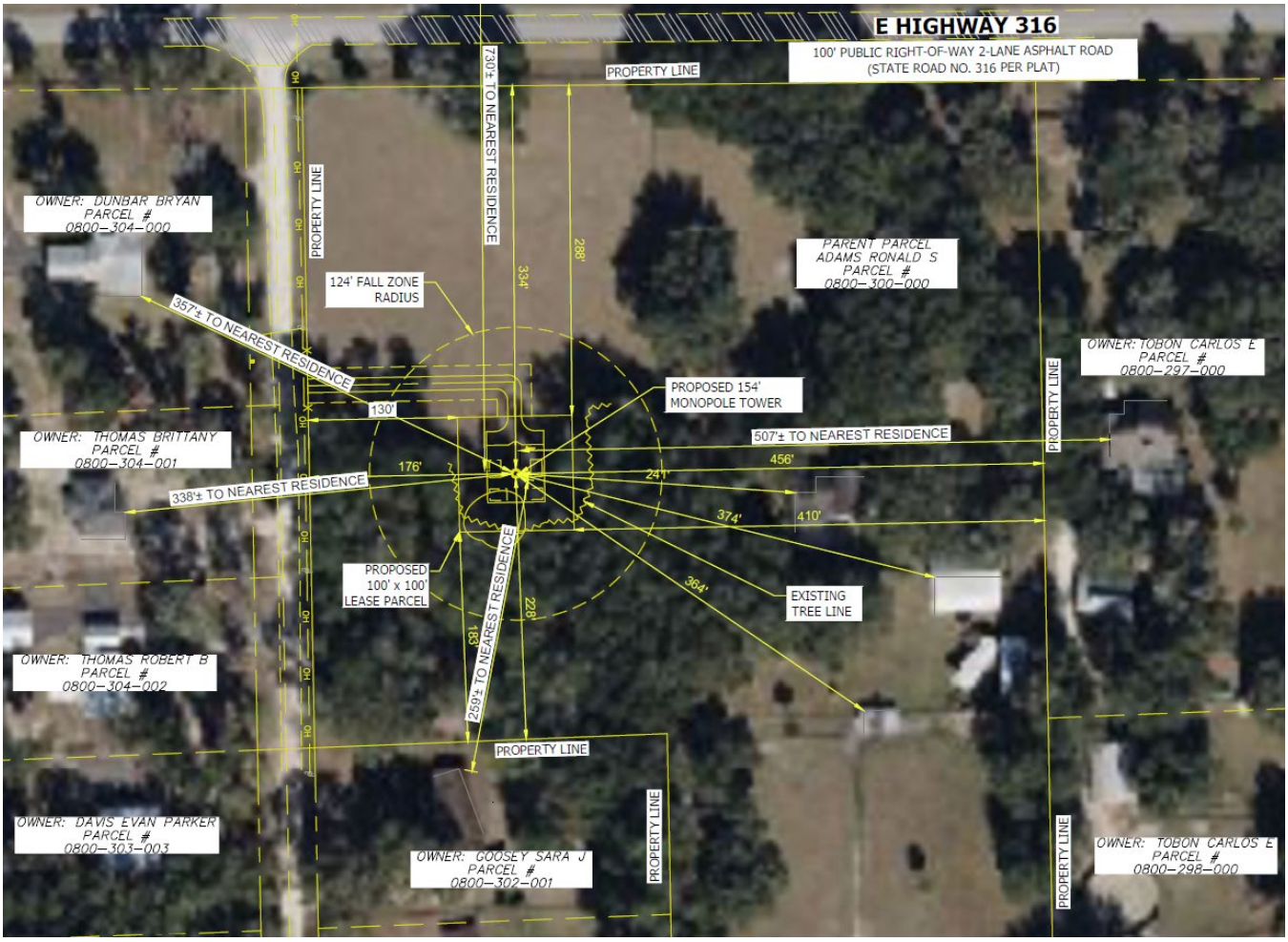


Figure 3
Enlarged Compound Layout

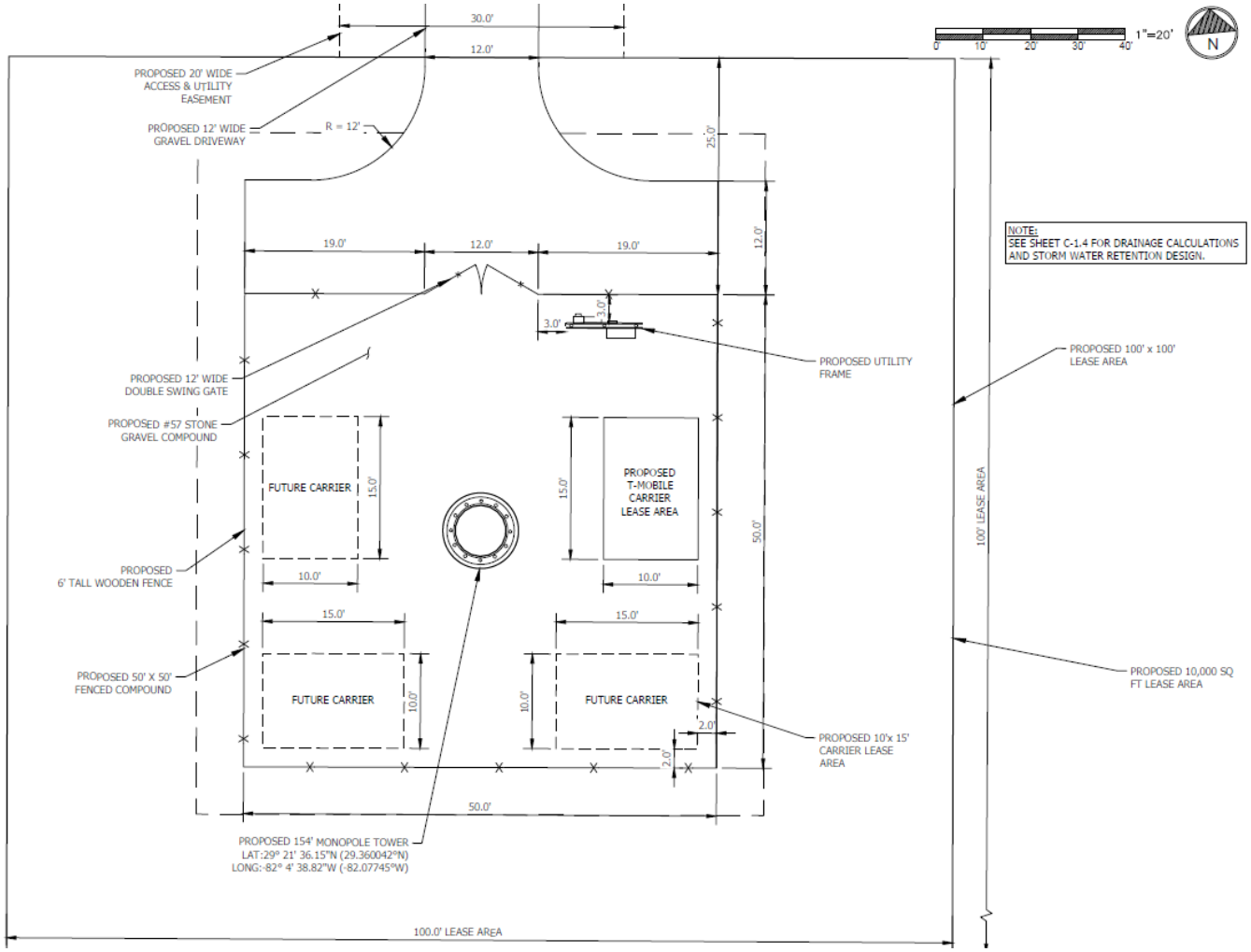
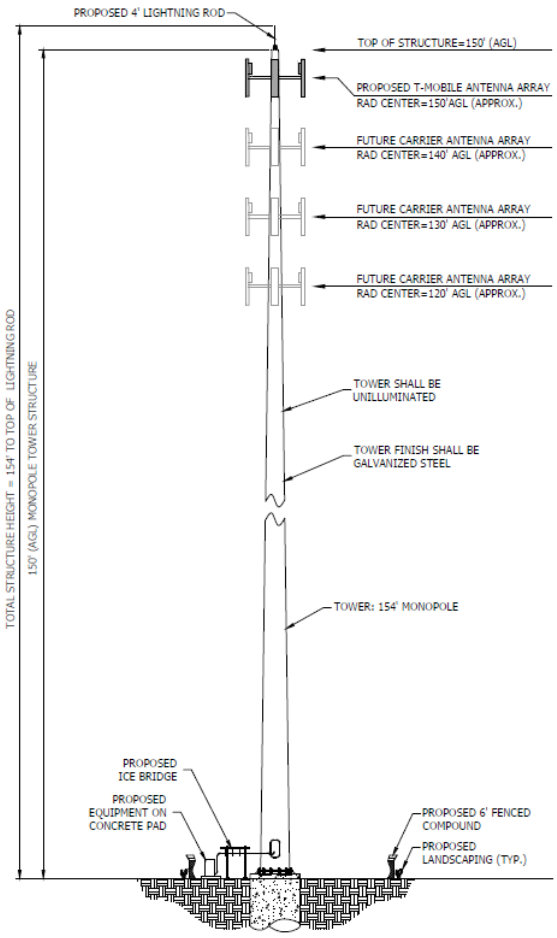


Figure 4
Tower Elevation



Above in Figures 2 and 3 (Attachment A) is the conceptual plan and enlarged compound layout provided by the applicant. The proposed monopole and equipment compound will be located in the northwestern portion of the parcel, adjacent to the most densely wooded area on-site. The monopole will be bordered by mature tree canopy on three sides, with additional open space to the north along E. Highway 316. Vertical Bridge's leased area encompasses approximately 10,000 square feet, including a 2,500-square-foot equipment compound. The compound will be enclosed by an 8-foot opaque wood fence and additional visual buffering. Required landscape buffers will be provided around the perimeter of the compound in accordance with the Land Development Code.

Figure 4 (Attachment A) shows the elevation provided by the applicant. The proposed telecommunications facility consists of a 154-foot-tall monopole-style tower, designed as a single dull-gray support pole with no guy wires or external ironwork. The tower will be unlit, with no nighttime lighting proposed. The elevation shows that the proposed monopole tower with the highest point of the main structure, which is the top of the lightning rod, will reach to the maximum height of 154 feet.

Figure 5 (Attachment A) shows the propagation maps and comparison without and with proposed tower on site. The proposed tower fill the gap of 4G coverage in the area.

Figure 5.1
Propagation Map without Proposed Tower

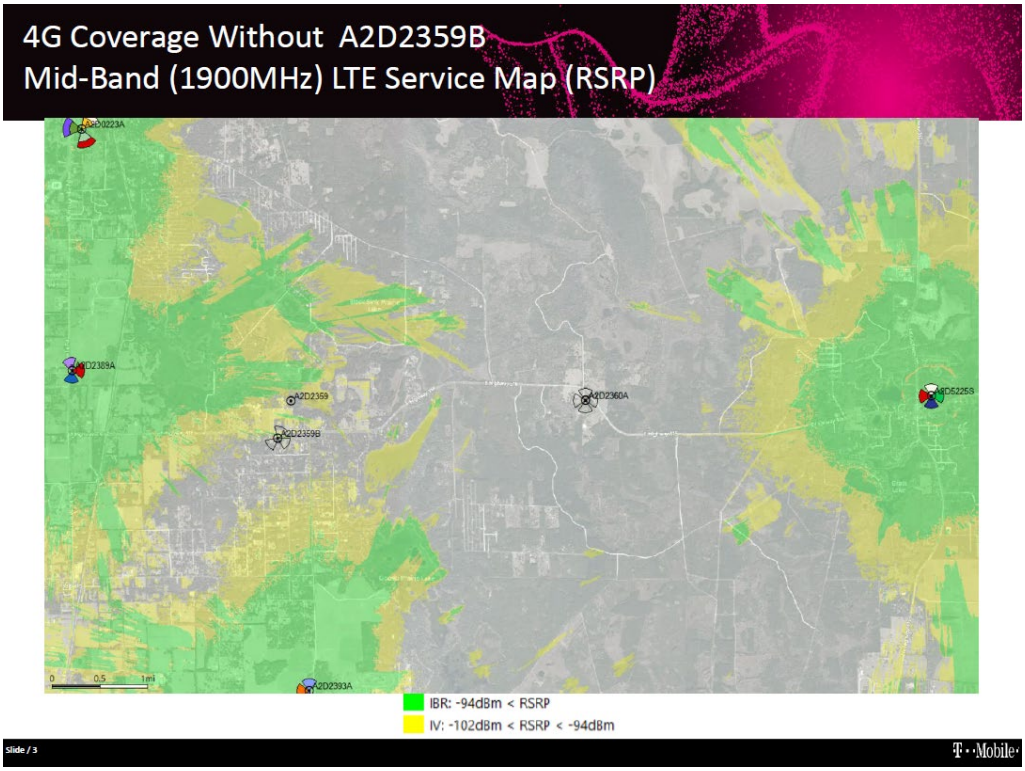
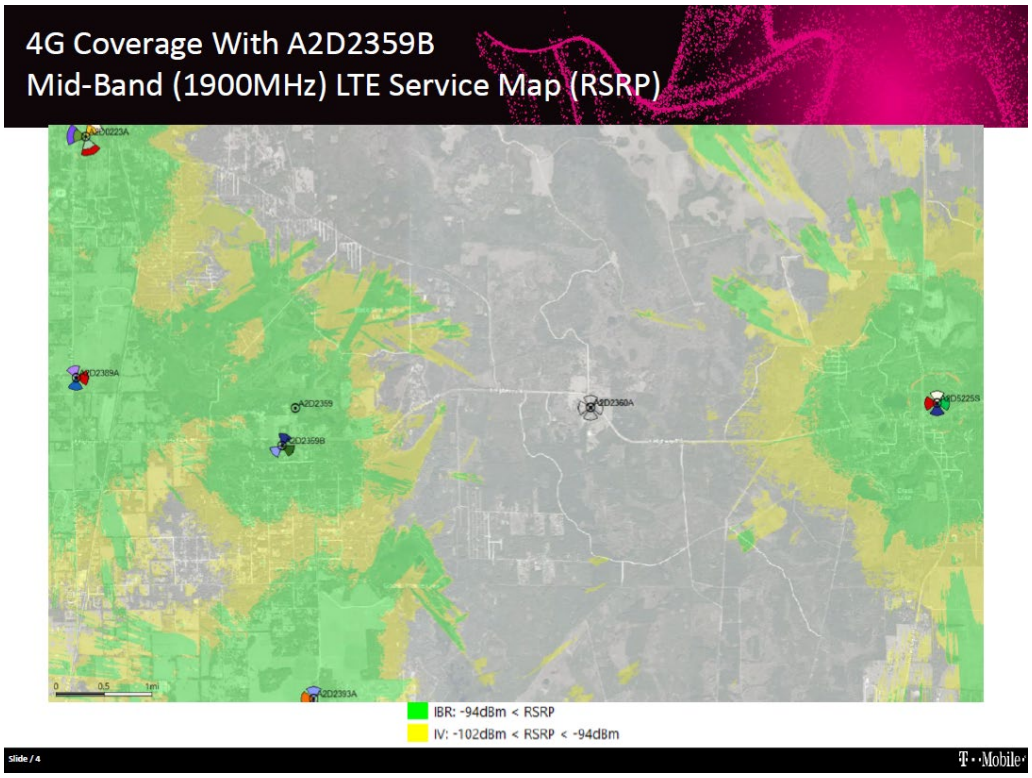


Figure 5.2
Propagation Map with Proposed Tower



II. STAFF SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval with conditions** specified in Section VII.B. of this Staff Report. The recommended conditions are being imposed to address compliance with the requirements in Land Development Code (LDC) Sections 2.8.2.D and 2.8.3.B.

III. NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.C, notice of public hearing was mailed to all property owners (24 property owners) within 300 feet of the subject property on February 13th, 2026. Consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.B, public notice was posted on the subject property on February 3rd, 2026 where site photos were also collected (Attachment C) and consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.E due public notice was published in the Ocala Star-Banner on February 16th, 2026. As of the date of the initial distribution of this staff report, one letter of opposition has been received. Evidence of the above-described public notices are on file with the Growth Services Department and are incorporated herein by reference.

IV. BACKGROUND/CHARACTER OF THE AREA

A. *Existing site conditions*. The subject parcel contains an existing single-family residence and partially cleared land with mature trees distributed throughout the property. Figure 6 shows that the existing condition of the property and Figure 7 shows the property is currently listed as Ag Production by the Marion County Property Appraiser's Office. The surrounding uses are single-family residential, agricultural production, and right of way.

Figure 6
Existing Conditions Map

Figure 7
Existing Uses Map by Marion County Property Appraiser's Office

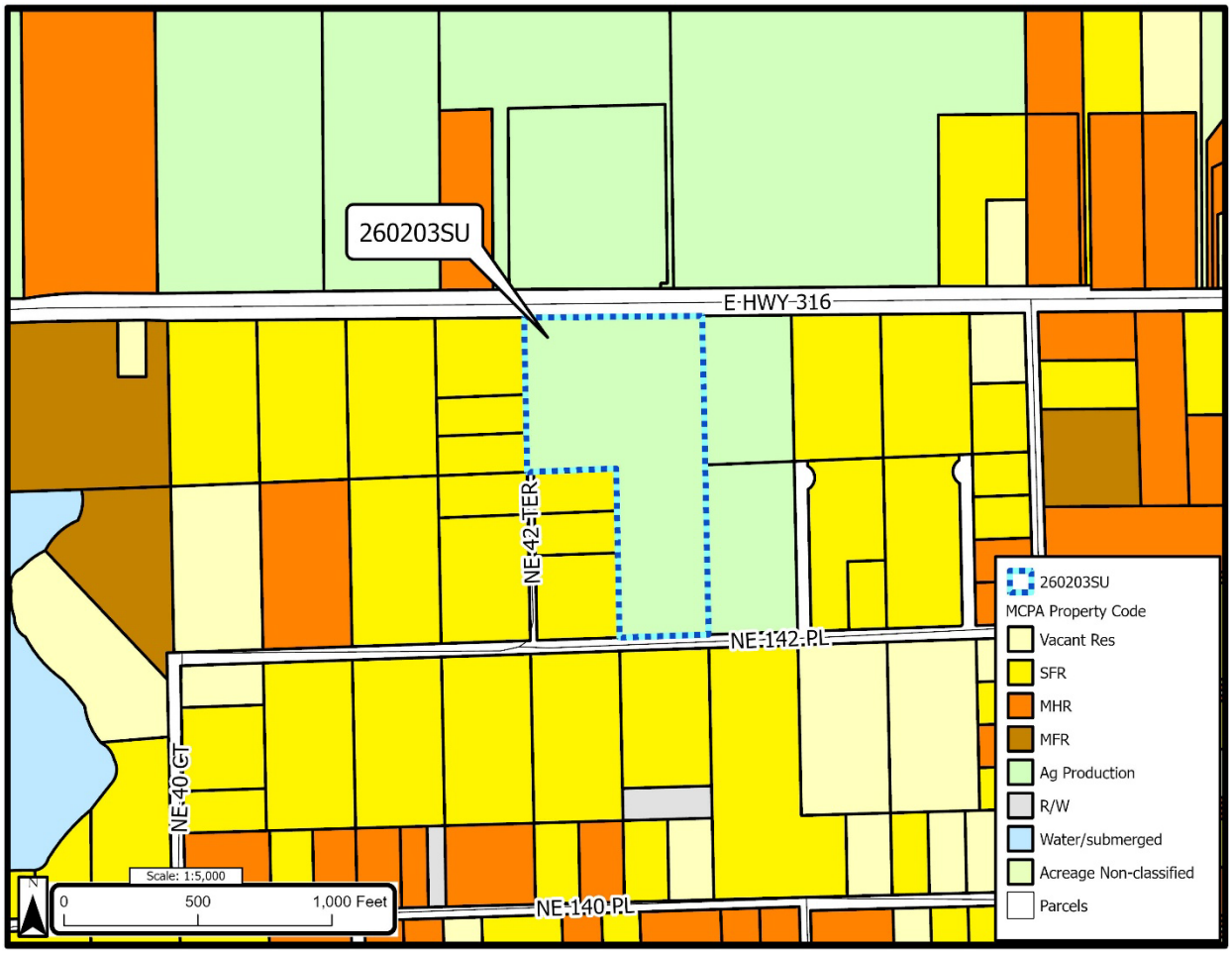


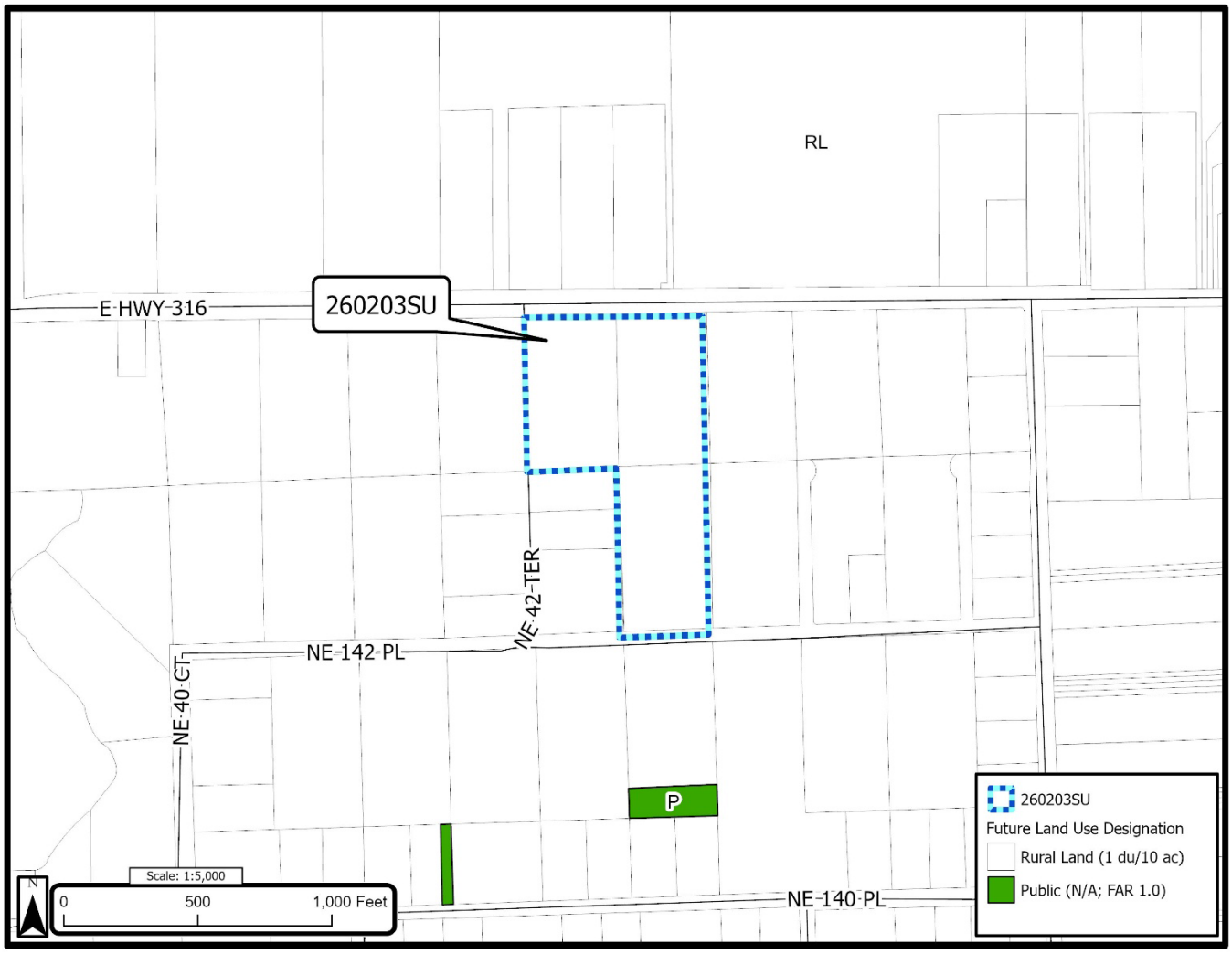
TABLE 1. ADJACENT PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
Direction	**FLUMS**	**Zoning**	**Existing Use**
Site	Rural Land (RL)	General Agriculture (A-1)	Ag Production
North	ROW	Single-Family Dwelling (R-1)	ROW
South	Rural Land (RL), ROW	General Agriculture (A-1), ROW	SFR, ROW
East	Rural Land (RL)	General Agriculture (A-1)	Ag Production
West	Rural Land (RL), ROW	General Agriculture (A-1), ROW	SFR, ROW

B. *Zoning district map*. Figure 8 shows the subject property, and the surrounding properties are classified as A-1. This is the property's initial zoning classification.

Figure 8
Zoning Classification

C. *FLUMS designation*. Figure 9 is the FLUMS and it shows that the subject property and abutting properties are designated Rural Land (RL). This is the property's initial land use designation.

Figure 9
FLUMS Designations



V. ANALYSIS

LDC Section 2.8.2.D provides that in making a recommendation to the Board, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall make a written finding the SUP addresses nine (9) specific requirements. LDC Section 2.8.3.B requires consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Staff's analysis of compliance with these ten (10) requirements are addressed below.

A. *Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan*.

1. Policy 2.1.5: **Permitted & Special Uses** – The county shall identify permitted and special uses for each land use designation and zoning

classification, as further defined in the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning, and LDC.

Analysis: LDC Section 4.3.25(D) allows for Special Use Permits for telecommunication towers. Within section 4.3.25(C), towers exceeding 150' in height must apply for a special use permit. Thus, the application is consistent with FLUE Policy 2.1.5. The new monopole tower except the height shall be compliant with the LDC requirements and be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

B. *Provision for **ingress and egress** to property and proposed structures thereon with particular reference to automotive and pedestrian safety and convenience, traffic flow and control, and access in case of fire or catastrophe*.

Analysis: Access to the proposed tower compound will be provided via a 30-foot-wide non-exclusive access and utility easement extending from NE 42nd Terrace, a 50-foot-wide, publicly maintained County right-of-way that connects to E. Highway 316. The access driveway shall be improved with a stabilized surface and designed with a turning radius sufficient to accommodate emergency vehicles, including fire apparatus, in accordance with Marion County Fire Rescue and applicable engineering standards. The access easement shall be maintained year-round to ensure reliable access for maintenance personnel and emergency responders. The proposed telecommunications facility is an unmanned use, and no pedestrian access is anticipated beyond authorized maintenance and service personnel. Due to the limited and infrequent nature of site visits, the proposed development is not expected to generate measurable traffic impacts or affect traffic flow and control in the surrounding roadway network.

Based on the information provided, staff finds that the application provides adequate provisions for ingress and egress and **is consistent** with the applicable Special Use Permit criteria. Conditions below are imposed:

- The access driveway and utility easement shall be designed, constructed, and maintained in compliance with applicable Marion County engineering standards and Marion County Fire Rescue requirements, including emergency vehicle access and turning radius standards.
- Access shall be maintained for emergency uses at all times during construction and operation of the facility.

C. *Provision for **off-street parking and loading areas**, where required, with particular attention to the items in (1) above and the economic, noise, glare, or odor effects of the SUP on adjoining properties and properties generally in the surrounding area*.

Analysis: The proposed telecommunications facility is an unmanned use, and site activity will be limited to periodic maintenance and service visits. Due to the infrequent nature of these visits, the proposed development is not expected to generate regular vehicular traffic or require designated off-street parking or loading areas. No off-street parking spaces are proposed as part of the application. Maintenance and service vehicles will access the site via the approved access

driveway and utility easement. According to the applicant, the tower will typically generate approximately one vehicle trip per month per carrier, with technicians generally accessing the site using pickup-sized vehicles. Maintenance and service vehicles will park within the access driveway at the gated entrance to the compound.

The proposed use will not generate noise, glare, odors, or other operational impacts that would adversely affect adjoining properties or the surrounding area. The monopole will be unlit and does not involve on-site generators or continuous mechanical operations. Staff concludes the application **is consistent** with the provision of off-street parking and loading areas.

D. *Provisions for **refuse and service area**, with particular reference to the items in (1) and (2) above*.

Analysis: This facility is an unmanned site and will not generate solid waste. Routine maintenance does not require on-site storage of refuse or hazardous materials. Any temporary construction debris will be removed upon project completion. The application **is consistent** with this provision.

E. *Provision for **utilities**, with reference to locations, availability, and compatibility*.

Analysis: The proposed facility is unmanned and does not require potable water or sanitary sewer services. Utility infrastructure associated with the tower will be limited to what is necessary to support telecommunications operations and will be located within the designated compound area. Staff concludes the application **is consistent** with the provision of utilities.

F. *Provision for **screening and buffering** of dissimilar uses and of adjacent properties where necessary*.

Analysis: The applicant proposes to locate the monopole telecommunications tower and equipment compound in the northwestern portion of the parent parcel, adjacent to an area of dense existing mature tree canopy. According to the application materials, mature trees will border the monopole and equipment compound on three sides, with additional mature canopy present throughout the remainder of the parcel and along the surrounding property lines. The applicant states that the existing tree canopy in the area helps break up viewsheds and provides natural visual buffering from neighboring properties.

The proposed equipment compound will be enclosed by an 8-foot opaque wood fence, which will provide additional visual screening and security. In addition, the applicant indicates that a landscape buffer meeting Code requirements will be installed around the perimeter of the compound.

To maintain the existing natural trees and proposed landscaping buffer, staff recommend the following conditions:

- Existing tree line buffers shall be maintained along the subject property's boundaries, except where removal is necessary for construction or access, subject to applicable permitting requirements.
- The landscape buffer shall be installed and maintained around the perimeter of the equipment compound in accordance with Marion County Land Development Code Sec. 4.3.25 Telecommunication Towers and Antennas E.(1)(c)(4) Landscapes and Buffers.

G. *Provision for **signs**, if any, **and exterior lighting** with consideration given to glare, traffic safety, economic effects, and compatibility and harmony with properties in the surrounding area*.

Analysis: The applicant proposes limited on-site signage consisting only of "No Trespassing" signs, site identification signage, and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) required safety placards, as shown on the submitted plans (Attachment A). No advertising or additional signage is proposed. The applicant indicates that the proposed monopole telecommunications tower will be unlighted and will remain dark at night. No exterior lighting is proposed for the tower or equipment compound beyond what may be required for safety or regulatory compliance. Due to the limited nature of the proposed signage and the absence of exterior lighting, the proposed development is not expected to create glare, adversely affect traffic safety, or result in negative economic impacts on adjoining properties. The proposed signage and lighting approach is compatible with the surrounding rural area and maintains harmony with adjacent properties. Based on the information provided by the applicant, staff finds that the request is consistent with the Special Use Permit criteria related to signage and exterior lighting.

- A photometric plan shall be provided during the Development Review Phase if additional lighting is proposed to be added to the site.

H. *Provision for **required yards and other green space***.

Analysis: The existing tree lines along the borders to the South, West, and East of the property will be maintained as buffering. A condition related to this issue has already been imposed in section F.

I. *Provision for general **compatibility** with adjacent properties and other properties in the surrounding area*.

Analysis: Compatibility is defined as a condition in which land uses or conditions can coexist in relative proximity to each other in a stable fashion over time such that no use or condition is unduly negatively impacted directly or indirectly by another use or condition. Figure 1 is an aerial photograph displaying existing and surrounding properties. Based on the given information, staff concludes that the proposed use is compatible with the surrounding area.

J. *Provision for meeting any **special requirements** required by the site analysis for the particular use involved*.

Analysis: Staff notes that unlike a variance, which runs with the land and is recorded in the public records, a special use permit is not recorded. As a result, a subsequent owner will not have notice of the requirements. Staff has recommended a condition that will void the SUP if the property changes hand.

- The Special Use Permit is limited to one monopole tower as indicated in the submitted application.
- A site plan approval is required before construction of the tower and compound.
- The Special Use Permit runs with Vertical Bridge (VB BTS II, LLC), and not the property.

Based on the above findings, Staff concludes the SUP is consistent with LDC Sections 4.2.28 and provided conditions to address the ten (10) requirements are imposed.

VI. ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, adopt the findings and conclusions contained herein, and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to **DENY** the special use permit amendment.

B. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a proposed Ordinance to **APPROVE AS CONDITIONED** the special use permit.

C. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, amend the findings and conclusions contained herein so as to support the approval of the Ordinance with amended conditions, and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a proposed Ordinance to **APPROVE WITH AMENDED CONDITIONS** the special use permit.

D. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, identify any additional data and analysis needed to support a recommendation on the proposed Ordinance, and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to **TABLE** the application for up to two months in order to provide the identified data and analysis needed to make an informed recommendation on the proposed Ordinance.

VII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

A. Staff recommends the Planning and Zoning Commission enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing

and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a proposed Ordinance to **APPROVE AS CONDITIONED** the special use permit.

B. To address compliance with LDC Sections 2.8.2.D and 2.8.3.B, the following conditions are imposed:

1. The Special Use Permit is limited to one monopole tower as indicated in the submitted application.
2. The site shall be developed and operated consistent with the submitted conceptual plan and the conditions as provided with this approval.
3. A site plan approval is required before construction of the tower and compound.
4. The access driveway and utility easement shall be designed, constructed, and maintained in compliance with applicable Marion County engineering standards and Marion County Fire Rescue requirements, including emergency vehicle access and turning radius standards.
5. Access shall be maintained for emergency uses at all times during construction and operation of the facility.
6. Existing tree line buffers shall be maintained along the subject property's boundaries, except where removal is necessary for construction or access, subject to applicable permitting requirements.
7. The landscape buffer shall be installed and maintained around the perimeter of the equipment compound in accordance with Marion County Land Development Code Sec. 4.3.25 Telecommunication Towers and Antennas E.(1)(c)(4) Landscapes and Buffers.
8. A photometric plan shall be provided during the Development Review Phase if additional lighting is proposed to be added to the site.
9. The Special Use Permit runs with Vertical Bridge (VB BTS II, LLC), and not the property.

VIII. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

To be determined.

IX. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' ACTION

To be determined.

X. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

A. SUP application.
B. DRC Comments.
C. Site Photos.
D. Additional Information from Applicant, dated 20260206
E. Revised Site Plan